



MENTORSHIP IN BUSINESS EDUCATION AND STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE

¹STEWART, Felicia Ezekiel

²EGBUNEFU, Chibuike

³ONYEGBULE, Blessing Chimezie

Department of Business Education,

Faculty of Education,

Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to determine the mentorship in Business Education and students' entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State. Two research questions and two hypotheses were developed for the study. The research design adopted in the study was descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised of 1,090 Business Education students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The sample size of the study consisted of 327 students. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested with z-test at the level of 0.05 significance. Thus, a total of 327 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. The research instrument used for garnering of data was titled: "School-Industry Partnership in Business Education Questionnaire". The instrument was validated by three experts in Business Education and in the field of Measurement and Evaluation. The instrument was tested for reliability and a coefficient of 0.81 was obtained which showed that the instrument was reliable. It was discovered that, mentorship and conferences in Business Education lead to students' entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made; Business Educators in Rivers State should intensify and strengthen the Business Education students through proper supervision, enlightenment, conferences and workshops. This will obviously help to broaden the students' knowledge about the programme and also accentuate their entrepreneurial skills and experiences.

Keywords: *Mentorship, Business Education, Entrepreneurship, Skills, Development*

Introduction

Mentorship for entrepreneurial development is an important factor for advancement in any entrepreneurial venture. Mentoring enhances 'Business Education Graduates' entrepreneurial pursuit. Mentorship is the ability to support and encourage students to manage their own learning in order that they may maximize their potentials, develop their skills, improve their performance and become what they want. Also mentoring could be defined as an effective way of helping people progress in their careers. Mentoring will help business education graduates to acquire the business knowledge as to enable them effectively acquire the needed business skills. Mentorship in entrepreneurship education is the act of teaching and inculcating the necessary behavior, skills and knowledge of entrepreneurship into the students/individuals (Iwu, 2018). According to Iwu (2018) mentorship is an organized activity and most times guided by the curricular and can be seen as offline tracing and making meaningful impact on knowledge, work or initiating business ideas.

Chukwumezie (2012) defined mentorship as a process of passing on a guided and organized skill and knowledge. Chukwumezie (2012) also stated that mentorship can be seen as a process of using specially trained people to provide occupational guide and advice which will help to develop the careers of individuals. Joes (2011) defined mentoring as a two-way process of dialoguing and planning, helping some people acquire expected competency and skills for a job or employment that can sustain and stabilize his economic level. According to Ezeanni (2012), Mentoring is associated with apprenticeship training, where individuals are expected to acquire technical skills from a more experienced and establish professionals Iwu (2015) stated that mentorship in entrepreneurship is highly needed. Mentorship through conferences go also go a long way in preparing Business Education students for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

Conferences are tool used to expose the academic staff of the tertiary institution to various



academic and administrative challenges. It is an effective staff development methodology which involves presentation of papers by scholars and experts on issues and problems affecting the educational system. These methods involve more than one experts imparting knowledge to a group of scholars. The scholars study problems, meet for discussion, examine new techniques and concepts. In this process, participants are encouraged to ask questions and express their views. Conferences provide a forum for networking, exchange ideas through reflection on participants' work as well as facilitating personally and academically growth (Rochford, Baxen & Inal, 2004). From this angle, individual participants leave the forum motivated to reconsider their own work in the light of feedback and as a result of the work of others (Gutek, 2007). In other words, it provides processes that ensure equity, career path enhancement and raised intellectual tone of participants. Networks are established hence strengthen inter-institutional collaboration, provides linkages between various institutions of higher learning and other agencies, exchange of views on particular issue and increase publication records.

Although, conferences could be perceived as exercise of short duration, the knowledge gained and acquired are immeasurable. Therefore, it remains a formidable avenue were potential could be reinstated and developed as well as also establish value of learning other's views on matters within his/her experiences. One of the pivotal consequences of conferences is that it promotes the activation of individuals' imaginations and opinions. Taking part in conferences helps to broaden the knowledge of the students and take them deeper into many other aspects of their prospective job components. This means that, through conferences greater range of growth opportunities that would not have been available to students are now made available. Attending conferences contributes in activating and reactivating the knowledge ability of students in different aspects of their academic pursuit. Scholars are always stimulated and have a tremendous impact of being exposed to novel ideas, concepts and experiences leading to enhancement of their talents.

The above exposition however underscores the observation made by Bontis and Serenko (2009) in their study of effectiveness of management development which reveals that most organizations send their employees who have acquired certain level of skills for seminars in order to update their knowledge. This is to acquaint them with new trends in technology, to cope with the fast changing and dynamic environment. The above may seem to imply also that a well trained staff requires little or no supervision because of the confidence and improvement in his skills and professional experiences. His predilection for his job and a feeling of satisfaction obviously increase as he can do his job satisfactorily and successfully.

This view was confirmed by Razia, Ferdousi and Ahmmed (2012) who conceived that workshops, seminars and conferences have to be organized by administrative heads in order to keep abreast of modern development and to accelerate standardize performance in separate areas of specializations. They were also of the opinion that so far the programme enables scholars to share assumptions, alter individual values, beliefs and mental images leading to development of a common responsibility. The above argument attested to the fact that knowledge is meaningless unless there is opportunity to apply it and much knowledge and skills can be acquired by exposure which inherent benefits is to use acquire talents to act appropriately. And it is also acknowledged that if a staff is confirmed to an idea, job without interaction and exposure through strategies of workshops conferences and seminars his mental focus is likely to deteriorate or decline.

In a nutshell, conferences give participants opportunity to getting away from the immediate job environment to see things from a distance with others who are doing the same thing. This condition also boosts the individual staff to clarify a particular problem since questions raised by other participants often enable one to study a point of views that otherwise would be difficult to understand easily. Collaboration in this aspect provides for varieties of inspirations, skills and talents that advance the quality of individual performance as well as the institution in the long run.

Statement of the Problem

Business Education students are expected to be guided, they are expected to acquire certain skills that would enable them develop certain skills, such as entrepreneurial skill that make them to be self-reliance. he or she is expected to undergo certain training under the tutelage of Business Educators. Business Education is a programme in which a graduate is required to demonstrate thorough practical and mental skills. Thus, the training should be the approximate situations in the world of work, especially with compulsory training through conferences. It is however observed that some Business Education graduates perform poorly in terms of entrepreneurial skills development, not able to create employment, but seek employment and roam the streets in search of white collar jobs which are not available. Could this be as a result of inadequate mentoring or failure in the



impartation of the appropriate skills by Business educators?

Purpose of the Study

This main purpose of the study was to determine the mentorship in Business Education and Students' Entrepreneurship Skills Development in Rivers State Universities. Specifically, the study attempted to:

1. determine the extent to which mentorship lead to Business Education students' entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State universities.
- 2.
3. determine the extent to which participation in conferences lead to Business Education students' entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study;

1. To what extent does mentorship in Business Education programme lead to students' entrepreneurship skills development in Rivers State universities?
- 2.
3. To what extent do participation in conferences in Business Education programme lead to students' entrepreneurship skills development in Rivers State universities?

Hypotheses

The following formulated hypotheses were used tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on mentorship for entrepreneurial skills development.
- 2.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on conferences for entrepreneurial skills development.

METHODOLOGY

The research design to be adopted for this study is the descriptive survey research design. The rationale for the selection of this design is because; the study describes how school-industry partnership influences the entrepreneurial skills development of Business Education students in Rivers State. The descriptive design explains certain features of the sample which are of interest to the research. The researcher also adopts the descriptive survey research design since at the end of this research the findings from the sample are generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn (Nwankwo, 2006). Descriptive survey according to Nwankwo (2006) entails the collection of data on more than one case and at a single point in time, in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables that are then examined to detect patterns of association. The population of the study was being the entire one thousand and ninety (1,090) Business Education students in level 300 in the 2018/2019 academic year which comprised of 660 students from Business Education Department of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and 430 from the Faculty of Business Studies in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. The choice of the population is based on the fact that in the two universities, 300 levels students offer Entrepreneurship Education as a course. The sample size of the study was three hundred and twenty-seven (327) Business Education students in 300 level. 198 students were drawn from Rivers State University and 129 students from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The sample size for the study is the representation of 30% of the population of the study. Random Sampling technique was employed to draw 30% from the respective options programme. The instrument for the study is a self-structured questionnaire titled: "School-Industry Partnership in Business Education Questionnaire (SIPIBEQ)". The questionnaire instrument contains 25 questionnaire items and is also structured in two parts: part A and B. Part "A" contains the demographic information of respondents such as name of the school and gender while part "B" deals with the responses to be garnered from the 25 questionnaire items. The instrument will be structured in 4-point rating scale. The research instrument



has the options of Very High Extent (VHE: 4), High Extent (HE: 3), Moderate Extent (ME: 2) and Low Extent (LE: 1). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation. The research instrument was validated by the research supervisor and two (2) other lecturers from the Faculty of Education in the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. They were checked, reframed, and relevance item of the instrument including the appropriateness, and clarity of the instrument for collection of the needed information for the study. All inputs were in form of comments and corrections from the experts were adequately utilized to modify the research instrument before it was administered. To establish the reliability of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were administered on a sample of 20 Business Education undergraduate students of University of Uyo who are not integral part of the population. The reliability of the instrument was ensured using pilot test technique. The application of statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20 using Cronbac h Alpha reliability method on the garnered data yielded a score of 0.81. The research instrument was administered to the respondents in the Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUOE) In Rivers State. The researcher and the research assistant ensured that all the copies of instrument administered were retrieved within the period of one week. Data collected were analyzed using Mean and standard deviation to answer four (4) research questions, while the four (4) hypotheses were tested using Z-test at of 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule: Any mean above 2.50 were High Extent while any one below 2.50 were low Extent

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent does mentorship in Business Education Programme leads to students' entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State?

Table 4.2: Computed Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of mentorship in Business Education Programme for Students' Entrepreneurial Skills Development

		N = 327						
S/N	Items	Rivers State University (n=198)			Ignatius Ajuru University (n=129)			
		\bar{X}_1	SD	Remark	\bar{X}_2	SD2	Remark	
1.	Mentorship enhances Business Education Students entrepreneurial pursuit.	3.26	0.81	High Extent	3.62	0.67	High Extent	
2.	Mentorship enables Business Education students to acquire technical skills.	3.43	0.70	High Extent	3.42	0.73	High Extent	
3.	Mentorship enhances students' planning and competency skills for an employment	3.25	0.78	High Extent	3.48	0.83	High Extent	
4.	Mentorship helps impact guided knowledge into Business Education Students	3.31	0.82	High Extent	3.36	0.78	High Extent	
5.	Mentorship promotes the inculcation of organized skills into the students.	3.39	0.70	High Extent	3.53	0.65	High Extent	
6.	Mentorship facilitates impastation of professional competencies in Business Education Students	3.14	0.88	High Extent	3.49	0.86	High Extent	
Total Mean\Std. Dev.		19.78	4.69		20.9	4.52		
Grand Mean\Std. Dev.		3.29	0.78		3/48	0.78		

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

From table 4:2 the grand mean scores for students in year three of Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt on the extent to which mentorship in Business Education programme leads to students' entrepreneurial skills development were 3.29 and 3.48 respectively with standard deviation of 0.78 and 0.78 respectively. These were



below the decision mean of 2.50. The low values of the standard deviation also indicate the views of the respondents. The implication is that mentorship in Business Education programs leads to students' entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State Universities.

Research Questions 2

To what extent does Conferences lead to students' entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State?

Table 4.4: Computed Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Conferences in Business Education Programmes for Students' Entrepreneurial Skills Development.

S/ N	Items	N = 327					
		Rivers State University (n=198)			Ignatius Ajuru University (n=129)		
		\bar{X}_i	SD	Remark	\bar{X}_2	SD2	Remark
1.	Conference provides a forum for professional entrepreneurial networking	3.42	0.57	High Extent	3.42	0.57	High Extent
2.	Conferences helps in initiating entrepreneurial theoretical and practical experiences	3.45	0.64	High Extent	3.44	0.80	High Extent
3.	Conferences provides entrepreneurial processes that ensure equity	3.21	0.84	High Extent	3.52	0.81	High Extent
4.	Conferences are tools used to expose students to various entrepreneurial skills.	3.45	0.62	High Extent	3.52	0.80	High Extent
5.	Conferences helps to promote the ideas of sharing entrepreneurial ideas of the specific learning methodologies	3.41	0.61	High Extent	3.41	0.77	High Extent
6.	Conference enable students to activate and reactive knowledge ability in different aspect their academic pursuit.	3.37	0.85	High Extent	3.41	0.80	High Extent
Total Mean\ Std. Dev.		20.31	4.13		20.81	4.75	
Grand Mean\Std. Dev.		3.38	0.68		3.46	0.75	

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

From table 4.4 above, the grand mean scores for year three students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the content to which conferences in Business Education lead to students entrepreneurial skills development were 3.38 and 3.46 respectively with standard deviation 0.68 and 0.75. These were above the decision mean of 2.50. the low values of the standard deviations also emphasized how closely related the individual responses from the grand mean are.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Students on the extent to which mentorship leads to entrepreneurial skill development.



Table 4.6: Computation of Difference in the Mean Ratings of Year Three Business Education Students.

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	α	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Remarks
RSU	198	3.29	0.78	0.05	325	0.87	1.96	Accepted
IAUE	129	3.48	0.75					

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

From Table 4.6, the z-calculated value of 0.87 is less than the z-critical table value of 1.96 at 0.05 levels of significance and degree of freedom of 325. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on mentorship on entrepreneurial skills development was accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of year three Business Education Students of Rivers state. University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Students on the extent conferences lead to entrepreneurial skills development.

Table 4.7: Computation of Difference in the Mean Ratings of Year Three Business Education Students

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	df.	α	z-cal.	z-crit.	Remarks
RSU	198	3.31	0.79	325	0.05	1.36	1.96	Accepted
IAUE	129	3.51	0.72					

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

From Table 4.7, the z-calculated value of 1.36 is less than the z-critical table value of 1.96 at 0.05 levels of significance and degree of freedom of 325. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on conferences for entrepreneurial skills development was upheld.

Summary of Major Findings

The following are the summary of the major findings of the result of the data analysis on the topic School-Industry Partnership in Business Education programme for students’ entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State Universities indicates that;

1. Mentoring in Business Education programme leads to students’ entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State Universities.
2. Conferences in Business Education programme leads to students’ entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State Universities.
3. There was no statistically significant difference between the Business Education students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on whether mentorship can bring about the entrepreneurial skills development of Business Education students.
4. There was no significant interaction effect of Business Education students in Rivers State University and Business Education students in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on how conferences influences entrepreneurial skills development of students.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings was done according to each research questions in chapter one and the analysis of the data obtained.

Extent Mentorship in Business Education Programme leads to Students entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State Universities

The result of the study revealed that mentorship enhances Business Education Students’ entrepreneurial skills development. The result of the study agreed with the findings of Ezeani (2012)



who stated that mentoring is associated with apprenticeship training, where industrials are expected to acquire technical skills from a more experienced and establish professional. The result of this study also revealed that mentorship enhances students planning and competency skills for employment. The result also revealed that mentorship enables Business Education students to acquire technical skills. This is in line with the observation of Chukwumezie (2012) who stated that mentorship can be seen as a process of using specially trained people to provide occupational guides and advice which will help to develop the careers of individuals.

Results of the hypothesis two indicated that there is no significant difference in mean responses of Business Education Students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. However, the responses of the Students showed that Mentorship in Business Education programme leads to Students entrepreneurial skills development.

Extent Conferences in Business Education Programme leads to Students entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State Universities

The result of the study revealed that conferences in Business Education lead to entrepreneurial skills development. It was revealed that conferences provide a forum for professional entrepreneurial networking and helps in initiating entrepreneurial theoretical and practical experiences. The findings in agreement with the assertion of Rechford, Baxen and Inai (2014) who stated that conferences a forum for networking, exchange ideas through reflection on participants' work as well as facilitating personally and academically growth. The findings of the study revealed that conferences provide an entrepreneurial process that ensures equity. Conference are tools used to expose students to various entrepreneurial skills and that conference help to promote the ideas of sharing entrepreneurial skills and that conference help to promote the idea of the specific learning methodologies. This is in line with the assertion of Ahmmed (2012) who conceived that have to be organized by administrative leads in order to keep abreast of modern development and to accelerate standardized performance.

Results of hypothesis three showed that there is no significant different in the mean responses of Business Education Students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. However, the responses of the students showed that Conferences in Business Education leads to Students entrepreneurial skill development,

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research work, the following conclusions were made;

1. Mentorship in Business Education programme leads to students' entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State Universities.
3. Conferences in Business Education programme leads to students' entrepreneurial skills development in Rivers State Universities.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. The principle, theory and practice of mentor-mentee relationship in Business Education programme in Rivers State universities should not be de-emphasized or down-played. Rather it should be encouraged, enhanced and made more intentional via adequate administrative policies and legal frameworks. This measure will help in contributing to the formal promotion and institutionalization of the practice within the system and thereby engender industrial and career development of the students.
2. Business Education students should be encouraged to actively participate in international and national academic conferences related to their area of study cum specialization via individual, government and/or TETFUND sponsorship. This will help in the advancement of the students' career knowledge and professional effectiveness.



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